

# Lifelong learning requires lifelong access

## Reflections on the ACRL Plan for Excellence

**R**ecently a discussion began in the ACRL Scholarly Communications Committee about the commonalities between scholarly communication and information literacy. Given the academic librarian's interest in promulgating a holistic view of the creation and use of knowledge, this topic deserves attention.

The discussion blossomed into a session at the 2011 ALA Annual Conference entitled "Global trends and local actions for liaison and teaching librarians to support changes in scholarly communication," cosponsored by the Scholarly Communications Discussion Group and the Information Literacy Coordinating Committee.

The session grew from the desire of the leaders of the two ACRL committees to provide a common forum in which to explore the intersections of their areas. The need for such a forum had been demonstrated by the movement to have liaison librarians engage faculty and students in scholarly communication discussions and by the number of relevant papers and presentations at ACRL 2011. One of these conference presenters approached the Scholarly Communications Committee to encourage the use of their discussion group to draw the connection between the earlier efforts to develop information literacy as a core expertise for librarians with emerging work regarding scholarly communication.

In addition, the ACRL/SPARC Forum held at the ALA Annual Conference planned to address the importance of being involved with the Berlin 9 Open Access Conference in Washington D.C. this November, encouraging

the linkage of local programs to global trends in scholarship.

The resulting Scholarly Communications Discussion Group meeting addressed these questions:

- How can information literacy programs help students learn about the whole cycle of scholarly communication?
- Scholarly communication librarians are frequently teachers; what can they learn from the information literacy experts?
- What lessons can be learned and ideas exchanged by librarians incorporating information literacy and scholarly communication issues into their work?

As I was listening to the speakers, a compelling phrase came to mind: *Lifelong learning requires lifelong access*. In other words, creating critical thinkers and expectations of continuous learning requires highly credible resources to be available, easily found, and recognized for their quality among the abundance of information propagated so freely on the Web.

The meeting perfectly paired two of our three areas of the new ACRL Plan for Excellence: "Student Learning" and "The Research and Scholarly Environment." The goals of these two areas call for librarians to transform student learning, pedagogy, and instructional practices through creative and innovative collaborations and to accelerate the transition to a more open system of scholarship. The inter-

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section being explored between these two areas complements the third strategic area of the plan that focuses on "Value of Academic Libraries" and seeks to demonstrate the alignment with and impact of academic libraries on institutional outcomes.

The three strategic areas are framed in the ACRL Plan for Excellence by a vision that proclaims, "academic and research librarians and libraries are indispensable to a thriving global community of learners and scholars."

Further, the plan envisions a future where: "Academic and research librarians and their colleagues lead initiatives and continually evolve services that provide scholars and learners the unfettered ability to create, access, and use knowledge on a global scale. Librarians drive and enable transformation of libraries, student learning, and scholarly research by building powerful coalitions and collaborations, setting standards, exploring innovative methods and approaches, modeling behavior, and embedding their results in dynamic user environments."

What a terrific way to launch my year as president, to see two areas of strength and strategy of ACRL begin to converge and reinforce each other. How appropriate that our own journal, *College and Research Libraries*, is now a fully open access publication. And what better way to achieve our envisioned future than to promote and inspire a continuous cycle of learning, creativity, and discovery.

Additional conversations and sharing of expertise that informed the Scholarly Communications Discussion Group meeting will be required, and the ACRL Scholarly Communications Committee has made preliminary plans for hosting another meeting and developing a white paper. Be watching for these developments.

As president of ACRL, I believe we are positioned to take on the powerful vision for the future presented in our plan, and I look forward to increasing our value by uniting lifelong learning with lifelong access for learners and scholars around the world. ♪

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